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ABSTRACT

During the spring 1981 semester, Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) conducted a survey of high school students and influential members of the community to obtain assessments of the need for various academic programs at QVCC. Questionnaires were distributed to nine high schools, where juniors and seniors were asked to indicate their possible interest in programs offered at QVCC and to suggest programs not currently offered that might increase QVCC's attractiveness. In a separate survey, 950 influential members of the community were asked to indicate which of the college's programs they considered appropriate and inappropriate. Study findings, based on responses from 738 students at 6 high schools and 148 community influentials, included the following: (1) 70% of the students hoped to go to college, and 41% of this group (N=125) indicated that they might consider enrolling at QVCC; (2) of those who intended to attend college, 62% hoped to go immediately and 35% hoped to attend within 5 years; (3) college aspirants who said they would consider attending QVCC expressed greatest interest in management, arts and sciences, and accounting programs; (4) the community influentials ranked accounting, executive secretary, and management programs highest in terms of need; and (5) both groups listed computers, computer programming, and data processing as additional programs most needed at QVCC. The questionnaires are appended. (HB)

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ED223304

QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACADEMIC PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1981 Spring Semester

JC 820 550

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Introduction

A survey was conducted during the 1981 spring semester to obtain updated assessments of the need for academic programs at Quinebaug Valley Community College. The opinions of two groups were sought. High school students (juniors and seniors) planning to go to college were asked both 1) to indicate their possible interest in programs presently available at QVCC, and also 2) to identify programs not now available which--if offered--might increase QVCC's attractiveness. Persons classified by virtue of occupation or civic leadership position as "community influentials" were asked to indicate which of QVCC's academic programs were still needed and which were not. They were also asked to identify possible new programs.

Prior to the college's opening a decade ago, the Citizens Planning Committee conducted a survey of needs among area high school students. Somewhat later, limited informal surveys were made in respect to applications to the state higher education authorities for approval of the medical secretary and human services associate degree programs. The most carefully-controlled study of program need was conducted five or six years ago by Dr. Frank Aleman in respect to the industrial supervisor program. The results of that study encouraged QVCC to apply for authorization to award an associate degree in industrial supervision.

The college needs to know from the community and from prospective students which present programs remain attractive and which may need to be modified or terminated, as well as what new programs may need to be added. High school students constitute but one category of potential QVCC students, yet they are a group the college hopes to attract in larger proportions in the future.

Method

With the support and encouragement of the Regional Advisory Council, the Acting Dean of Instruction prepared two forms of a questionnaire. Both forms were improved by suggestions from council members, QVCC faculty members, the college's admissions officer, and guidance counselors from the region's high schools. Copies of the forms are attached. A college fact sheet accompanied each questionnaire.

To nine schools college personnel delivered the questionnaires in the numbers requested. The questionnaires were distributed in the schools through the good offices of the counselors. The forms were distributed in different ways in different schools. Three schools found it not feasible to complete the survey. Questionnaires were delivered to the schools in late April and returned over the next few weeks. A total of 738 completed forms was returned, representing a return rate of about 50% of the forms delivered to the six schools that completed their participation in this survey. The distribution of returns is displayed in Table I.

TABLE I.

DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

High School	Juniors	Seniors	Total
Ellis Tech	74	64	138
Killingly	168	102	270
Parish Hill	24	30	54
Plainfield	20	35	55
Putnam	77	85	162
Woodstock	19	40	59
TOTALS	382	356	738

The questionnaire for the community influentials was mailed with return envelope to government leaders, school board members and school administrators, business leaders and executives in industry and commerce, attorneys, health professionals, the clergy, and social service agency directors. An accompanying statement from President Robert E. Miller explained the project and invited participation. No follow-up efforts were made to stimulate return. Approximately 950 questionnaires were mailed; 148 were returned. The distribution of returns from community influentials is displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 2.

DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS: COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

Category	Number
Attorneys	7
Clergy	5
Educators, Librarians, and Social Workers	35
Government Officials	7
Health Professionals	12
Managers and Executives	13
Merchants and Bankers	17
Personnel Administrators	13
Other	2
Not specified	37
TOTAL	148

Results

Student responses to Question 1 and Question 2 are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3.

COLLEGE ASPIRATIONS

High School		Questionnaires Returned	Q.1. Do you hope to go to college? Answered Yes		Q.2. If yes to Q.1, would you consider QVCC? Answered Yes	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
		Col. A	Col. B	Col. C	Col. D	Col. E
ELLIS TECH	Juniors	74	28		15	
	Seniors	64	25		12	
	Both Classes	138	53	38	27	51
KILLINGLY	Juniors	168	120		44	
	Seniors	102	82		31	
	Both Classes	270	202	75	75	37
PARISH HILL	Juniors	24	16		8	
	Seniors	30	16		3	
	Both Classes	54	32	59	11	34
PLAINFIELD	Juniors	20	15		8	
	Seniors	35	30		7	
	Both Classes	55	45	82	15	33
PUTNAM	Juniors	77	60		36	
	Seniors	85	76		28	
	Both Classes	162	136	84	64	47
WOODSTOCK	Juniors	19	18		11	
	Seniors	40	34		12	
	Both Classes	59	52	88	23	44
ALL SCHOOLS	Juniors	382	257	67	122	47
	Seniors	356	263	74	93	35
	Both Classes	738	520	70	215	41

Column C expresses the number in Column B as a percent of the figure in Column A.

Column E expresses the number in Column D as a percent of the figure in Column B.

In summary, 520 or 70% of all students responding indicated that they hope to go to college. Of that group 215 or 41% of the college aspirants reported that they might consider enrolling at Quinebaug Valley Community College.

Question 1.1 asked college-aspirants to indicate how soon after high school graduation they hoped to enter college. Among the 520 who expressed the hope to go to college, the responses were as follows:

Immediately	322	(62%)
Within 5 years	181	(35%)
Other	13	(3%)

The main question on the community influentials questionnaire may be seen as a variant of Question 3 on the student form. The responses both from students and from community influentials are displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4.

INDICATIONS OF PROGRAM ATTRACTIVENESS AND NEED

	Program Attractiveness for High School Students Considering QVCC				Program Need Assessments of Community Influentials			
					Program Needed			
	First Choice		Second Choice		Yes		No	
	No.	N=215 %	No.	N=215 %	No.	N=148 %	No.	N=148 %
Accounting	21	10	24	11	133	90	4	3
Arts & Sciences	35	16	19	9	115	78	11	7
Aviation Maintenance	11	5	12	6	90	61	26	18
Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor	5	2	16	7	94	64	18	12
Executive Secretary	25	12	12	6	130	88	6	4
General Studies	22	10	20	9	101	68	14	9
Human Services	24	11	13	6	106	72	13	9
Industrial Supervision	6	3	5	2	115	78	14	9
Management	38	16	26	12	127	86	4	3
Medical Secretary	3	1	13	6	104	70	8	5

College aspirants who would consider QVCC reported greatest interest (first and second choices combined) in management, arts and sciences, and accounting. Excluding the industrial supervision program, which the questionnaire explained was primarily for persons already employed, students expressed least interest in the medical secretary program. The three programs ranking highest in need on the basis of the community influentials' assessments were accounting (90%), executive secretary (88%), and management (86%). The greatest numbers of "not needed" responses were recorded for the aviation maintenance program and the drug and alcohol rehabilitation counselor program.

Both groups of respondents (students and community influentials) were given the opportunity to suggest additional programs needed at QVCC. Many individuals took the opportunity to respond. Because of the variety in terminology used, this information did not lend itself to easy categorization and precise tabulation. Many recommended subjects/programs were listed by only one or a very few respondents. Nonetheless, certain clusterings seemed to emerge. Without question, computers, computer programming, and/or data processing were listed with greatest frequency by both groups (at least 30 influentials and 40 students)--far ahead of any other recommendation. Three other areas in which both responding groups seemed to concur on need were nursing, various health field technologies, and engineering technologies or "technical programs." Legal assistant and merchandising/marketing were each listed also by five or more community influentials. Categories in which student responses seemed to cluster were arts and music, environmental studies, various trades (machinist, carpentry, electronics), architectural drafting, and media communication. Also listed with great frequency by students were terms typically used to designate 1) four-year college majors (psychology, mathematics, biology) and/or 2) preparation for professional study (pre-law, pre-engineering, pre-medical).

Question #4 on the student form provided an opportunity for students to comment on factors other than programs that might affect their consideration of QVCC as the college they might attend. Again the range of terminology used in responding to this question and the ambiguity of some responses made precise tabulation both difficult and possibly misleading. What seems clear from an examination of the comments is that a significant proportion of respondents took a very practical position, pointing to the facts that convenient location and low tuition would greatly reduce expenses compared to other options. Other responses clustered around such factors as "reputation," "variety of offerings," and "transferability of credits." Considerable numbers of students listed factors that eliminate QVCC from their considerations: "too close to home," "residential accommodations," and "sports program."

Very few students offered extensive comments; some were content to use single words or short phrases to express their ideas. In response to Question #2, which asked if the respondent would consider QVCC, one student placed a heavy black X on the line for the negative answer and in the margin, also in a heavy black notation wrote "GROSS!" Another student observed in the general comments space that "The school sucks. Only a mindless nitwit would waste his time going to college in Danielson!!"

In respect to factors to be considered in selecting a college, one student wrote in language that did not clearly reflect an evaluation of QVCC: "Knowing that this is considered a real college not a sort of secondary college."

Two students composed thouthtful positive responses, both of which are reproduced here.

> A good thing about QVCC is that it would be a relatively inexpensive way to get through the first two years of college which don't usually get into depth of your major and then you could transfer to another college for the intensified studying of your major.

> QVCC's reputation dwindles as a "little college that really isn't recognized by too many people." Many don't consider QVCC because they want a much more prestigious school with more to offer. I personally don't see it this way. It's a school for learning, not for snobs.

The final item on the student questionnaire asked if the person answering would consider taking an individual course at QVCC. Of the 738 total respondents, 367 replied in the affirmative.

Community influentials were also invited to express general comments. Many wrote brief explanatory remarks beside the list of programs; others offered a brief rationale for a new program they were suggesting. Those recommending programs in computers and data programming seemed most prone to comment on and/or emphasize the need for such programs. Five respondents emphasized the need to consider educational programs in respect to economic prospects and job opportunities.

Eighteen of the 148 respondents availed themselves of the space provided for general comments. Two expressed the belief that the more a community college can offer to the area it serves, the better. Two others stated a conviction that the college should continue to stress good basic skills and strong general humanities training. Five encouraged the college simply to "keep up the good work."

Discussion

Different reviewers of the survey information presented above may formulate different interpretations and draw varying conclusions. Some of the author's conclusions/interpretations follow:

> Provision to high school students of more information about the college might well result in increased consideration of and enrollment at QVCC. Such provision might include information about:
>
> -- the nature of community colleges,
> -- programs available at QVCC,
> --quality of faculty at QVCC,
> --benefits of attending a low-tuition, non-residential college within convenient commuting range of home.

There seems to be interest in and support for most of the programs presently available. Recruiting efforts directed at high school students might attempt to capitalize on student interest in the arts and sciences and on the transferability of work completed at QVCC.

Those programs that attract least interest and support are those in which the college can continue to participate with no increase in the allocation of resources.

The interest in/demand for instruction in computers and data processing is extensive and represents an area to which the college should allocate or reallocate resources as quickly as feasible.

Nursing and a variety of allied health technologies represent areas where because of high student costs generated by expensive equipment and low student:faculty ratios, it is not feasible for QVCC to consider mounting programs unless there are changes in funding.

The information generated through this survey might well be examined for possible implications by a number of groups, among them: the Regional Advisory Council, the Educational Services Committee, the College Development Committee, the student services division, and the academic divisions.

Quinebaug Valley Community College

ACADEMIC PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

We invite your response to this brief questionnaire. Your answers to these few questions will be most helpful as we plan for the years just ahead. Thank you for your cooperation.

High School: _____ Class: __Jr. __Sr.

1. Do you hope to go to college?

   Yes ___
   No ___

   1.1 If yes, how soon after high school graduation?
   Immediately ___
   Within 5 years ___
   Other (specify) ___

2. If you are planning to go to college, are you considering or would you consider attending Quinebaug Valley Community College?

   Yes ___
   No ___

3. If you are considering Quinebaug Valley Community College, which of the associate degree (two-year) programs presently available at QVCC is of greatest appeal? (Check one in each column)

	First Choice	Second Choice
Accounting	___	___
Arts & Sciences (college transfer)	___	___
Aviation Maintenance	___	___
Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor	___	___
Executive Secretary	___	___
General Studies	___	___
Human Services (social work, child care, work with older persons)	___	___
Industrial Supervision (primarily for presently employed foremen and supervisors in industrial plants)	___	___
Management (Business Administration)	___	___
Medical Secretary	___	___

4. What other program(s) not now available might lead you to consider QVCC if the college were to offer that program?

   _____

5. What factors other than programs available might bear on your consideration of QVCC as a college you might attend?

   _____

   _____

6. Even if you do not plan to attend QVCC full-time or to get a degree from Quinebaug, would you consider taking an individual course at QVCC?

   Yes ___
   No ___

Please feel free to share any general comments on the reverse side.

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Quinebaug Valley Community College

ACADEMIC PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

We welcome your response to this brief questionnaire. The results will help us plan more effectively for the years just ahead. Thank you for your cooperation.

Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) shares in common with other community colleges these characteristics: open-door admissions, proximity to citizens, relatively inexpensive student costs.

QVCC is licensed to award associate degrees in the programs listed below. In your judgment, based on your knowledge of the region, of education needs, and of employment trends, for which QVCC programs do you believe there continues to be a need?

Present Programs	Need for Program Still Exists	
	Yes	No
Accounting	☐	☐
Arts & Sciences (college transfer)	☐	☐
Aviation Maintenance	☐	☐
Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor	☐	☐
Executive Secretary	☐	☐
General Studies	☐	☐
Human Services (social work, child care, work with older adults)	☐	☐
Industrial Supervision	☐	☐
Management (Business Administration)	☐	☐
Medical Secretary	☐	☐

One-year certificate programs also available in Business Administration, Industrial Supervision, and Secretarial Science.

What two-year college programs (or one-year certificate programs) not presently available at QVCC do you believe the college should offer?

_____

_____

OPTIONAL: Your occupation_____

General Comments (please use other side)

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Quinebaug Valley Community College

QUINEBAUG QUICK-FACTS

TYPE	Public, two-year, coeducational, nonresidential
LOCATION	Danielson, Connecticut (Campus in advanced planning stage.)
ACCREDITATION	New England Association of Schools and Colleges Connecticut Board of Higher Education
PROGRAMS	Arts and Sciences, Aviation Maintenance, Business emphases in Accounting, Industrial Supervision, and Management, Secretarial emphases in Executive and Medical, Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor, General Studies, Human Services. One-year certificate programs also available. Day and evening classes.
CALENDAR	Semester
ENROLLMENT	936 in credit courses (Fall, 1980) Part-time students welcome. 500 (approximate annual) in noncredit activities.
TUITION	$202 tuition and fees per semester, full-time, in-state. (General Fund courses.) $10.25 per credit hour plus fees, part-time
FINANCIAL AID	Several plans available
LIBRARY	New 15,000 volume collection related to fields taught. Administers U.S. Government Documents Depository.
AFTER QVCC, WHAT?	For many: transfer to other colleges (for example, UConn, ECSC, Nichols, Mount Holyoke, UTexas, Amherst, Bryant). Better jobs; fuller lives
EMPHASIS NOTE	*Attending your local community college saves money and provides a foundation either for immediate employment or for transfer as a junior (or earlier) to a four-year college. In today's economy attending your local community college makes better sense than ever.*

For more information call the QVCC Admissions Office 774-1130 Ext. 5 or 7.

Please retain this sheet or share it with a friend.

ATTACHMENT A. SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

During the 1981 spring semester a district executive of the local Boy Scout council shared some data he had collected for purposes of program development. The scouting organization was interested in learning from local high school students in grades 9-12 their primary career and chief hobby interests. Because of a personnel change involving the individual who provided volunteer computer programming service, data had been tabulated for only three of the area's high schools: Killingly, Putnam, and Tourtellotte.

Selected for display in the accompanying table are some "Primary Career Interest" categories selected from the printout sheets because of 1) the relatively large number of students expressing an interest or 2) the congruence or similarity of these categories to subjects/programs available at QVCC.

These data supplement the returns from the QVCC academic programs need assessment survey. They provide additional insights into possible directions for program development and recruiting efforts.

Selected Careers	Killingly	Putnam	Tourtellotte	3 School Total
Secretary/stenographer	37	35	13	85
Child Care	37	17	10	64
Music	24	14	15	53
Nurse	22	9	14	45
Accountant/CPA	20	7	14	41
Computer programmer	13	10	16	39
Business owner	18	8	6	30
Special education teacher	20	8	2	30
Teacher/counselor	10	9	8	27
Radio/TV broadcasting	7	9	11	27
Photographer	12	8	7	27
Architect	14	3	7	24
Business management	9	9	5	23
Journalist/writer	10	10	3	23
Artist, commercial	11	5	6	22
Artist, non-commercial	11	2	6	19
Biology	8	9	2	19
Computer operator/kepunch	9	4	5	18
Oceanography/marie biology	8	3	5	16
Social worker	9	5	2	16
Dramatics/theater	7	5	4	16
Mathematics/statistics	5	3	5	13
Physics/space sciences	4	5	3	12
Anthropology/archeology	3	6	2	11
Chemistry/biochemistry	2	4	3	9
Banking	3	2	4	9
Computer maintenance	3	3	2	8
Astronomy	4		3	7
Systems analyst	3	1	2	6
Advertising/marketing		4	2	6

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